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id: 144460  
date: 3/5/2008 21:11  
refid: 08LIMA397  
origin: Embassy Lima  
classification: CONFIDENTIAL  
destination: 08LIMA385  
header:  
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E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/05/2018  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [CO](#) [EC](#) [PE](#)  
SUBJECT: GARCIA SEEKS SOLUTIONS WITH "AGITATED" CORREA  
REF: LIMA 385

Classified By: CDA James Nealon for reasons 1.4 (B)

¶1. (C) Summary: Ecuadorian President Rafael Correa flew to Lima on March 4th to meet President Alan Garcia on the first stop of a regional tour to drum up support for his country in the aftermath of Colombia's raid on the FARC inside Ecuador. According to a readout from Peru's Foreign Minister, Correa was very agitated in the meeting, focused on the principle of national sovereignty and on President Uribe's alleged duplicity rather than on finding solutions. Garcia, by contrast, said Peru was working closely with Brazil on a proposal that called for a Colombian apology and commitment to improved bilateral counterinsurgency coordination as well as OAS rebuke of Colombia and a fact-finding mission. The Presidents' public comments echoed the private meeting, with President Garcia emphasizing Peru's sympathy with both

Ecuador's concern over national sovereignty and Colombia's FARC challenge. Garcia added a blunt rebuke of Venezuela's effort to exacerbate the bilateral conflict, and highlighted Peru's concerns with Bolivarian ideological and political meddling in Peru. Our Peruvian contacts underscore that Peru's own experience with terrorism grounds its reaction in reality as well as high principle. End Summary.

#### Correa Focused on Principles, Garcia on Solutions

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¶2. (C) Ambassador McKinley called Foreign Minister Jose Antonio Garcia Belaunde March 4 for a readout of the meeting earlier in the day between Ecuadorian President Correa and President Garcia to discuss the crisis resulting from Colombia's recent attack on a FARC camp inside Ecuador. Belaunde described Correa as extremely agitated throughout most of the meeting and not focused on finding a diplomatic solution to the crisis. Instead, Correa criticized Colombia's violation of Ecuadorian national sovereignty, arguing that the Colombians knew where FARC commander Raul Reyes was located several days before the attack but did nothing until he had entered Ecuadorian territory. Correa also vented his anger at the GOC for "misrepresenting" as collusion his Interior Minister's contacts with FARC. Correa argued that Uribe had express knowledge of these contacts, which were solely intended to negotiate hostage releases. He also sought to justify his own efforts to remove the FARC in Ecuador, claiming to have liquidated 47 FARC encampments since his election.

¶3. (C) President Garcia in turn promoted a diplomatic solution, which Peru had coordinated closely with Brazil, involving another Colombian apology combined with a commitment to handle future FARC border operations differently. He also proposed a parallel resolution in the OAS that would combine a rebuke of Colombia's actions (but short of a full condemnation), with an agreement to allow a fact-finding mission, and a Foreign Ministers meeting to bless the accord. (Note: Belaunde believed such a compromise would satisfy Correa. End Note.) Garcia emphasized that for a deal to be reached it was important to focus on a bilateral Ecuador-Colombia solution and not allow Venezuelan President Chavez to insinuate himself and exacerbate tensions. It was important to "de-Chavezify" the situation, he said. Garcia added that President Uribe deeply distrusted Correa, and it was important for Correa to address that concern. Correa did not seem convinced by that argument.

#### Public Statements Reflect Private Meeting

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¶4. (C) The statements of Presidents Correa and Garcia to the press afterwards broadly mirrored their private discussion. An impassioned Correa concentrated on the principle of national sovereignty and the offenses of "the aggressor" against his country. At one point he asked rhetorically how the GOP would have reacted if their territory had been bombed, and lamented that his government had no choice but to distance itself from the GOC. He also accused Uribe of seeking a "war trophy" to ensure reelection to a third term, and sought to shield himself from incriminating revelations by referring to "computers that miraculously survived bombardment." (Comment: Correa clearly insinuated that the Colombians had planted the computers. End Comment.)

¶5. (U) President Garcia, in his comments, played the role of statesman seeking common ground for a rapid solution. Garcia began with a call for respect for the international legal principle of inviolable sovereign territory, criticized Colombia for going beyond what is permitted by international law, and encouraged President Uribe to apologize to the Ecuadorian government and people. Garcia added that he recognized the dangers and challenges that Colombia faced with its internal conflict, and emphasized that Peru has dealt with and continues to deal with an insurrection of its own. He said that, once the current impasse is resolved, the countries involved should hold broad discussions on the dangers of insurgency and ideological penetration. In this connection, he launched into a passionate criticism of Venezuela and its persistent meddling in the internal affairs

of other countries in the region, including Peru. Garcia closed by emphasizing that Venezuela should not seek to involve itself and exacerbate the conflict.

Comment: Peru Sympathetic to Colombia

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¶6. (C) While the GOP and many analysts almost always cite the principle of national sovereignty first in framing the discussion, most observers emphasize that Peru's own traumatizing experience with terrorism provides ballast and real world grounding to its reaction. If national sovereignty is indeed a critical principle, so is the need for a concerted regional effort to ensure terrorists or provocateurs are not using neighboring territory to stage attacks or plan actions. GOP allegations regarding Venezuelan efforts to undermine Peru's democracy or sow instability during Peru's year of international summits via "ideological penetration" -- the Bolivarian Continental Coordinator, ALBA houses, etc. -- only redoubles its emphasis on the second principle. Both points suggest President Garcia will continue to press a balanced solution to the current impasse that underscores the principle of sovereignty but offers no respite to the FARC or President Chavez. End Comment.

NEALON

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